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# HEALTH News

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## Sexual Reproductive health in Cameroon

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International Human Rights Organizations are advocating for a minimum emergency relief package for girls and women in humanitarian crisis zones of Cameroon. P3



### Plastic pollution 78% of water tested contains microplastics



As Cameroon joins the rest of this July 3 to commemorate the International plastic bags free day, Dr Gilbert Kuepouo, coordinator of the Centre for Research and Education for Development (CREPD) says a 2018 study found out that 3,377 chemicals are potentially linked to plastic pollution and 906 are associated with packaging plastics, of which 148 have been identified to be more dangerous. P10

### “Carrefour Caca” Nightmare for Inhabitants of Yaoundé VI subdivision

At carrefour Caca, excrements mixed with water flow onto the road, leaving an unbearable and disgusting odour. Some fifteen septic tanks connected to nearby houses of the neighborhoods of Biyem-Assi, Accacias, Jouvence, all in the Yaoundé VI subdivision, have been built in the middle of the main road. Despite their proximity to administrative buildings and even a market, they are not maintained, hence causing a nuisance and putting the health of population at risk. P3

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## Overage and results of early infant diagnosis among babies followed up using the prevention of mother to child transmission cohort monitoring strategy in the centre region of cameroon

F. Tumasang<sup>1\*</sup>, E. Muna, S. Kadia, K. E Tshimwanga, Esa, B. A Bakor P.Tih1

### INTRODUCTION

According to UNAIDS, 180,000 children were infected with HIV in 2017 and about 80% of them are from the priority countries. Cameroon is among those 22 priority countries in which prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV is sub-optimal. In 2013, only 24% of exposed infants had a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test done by the age of 8 weeks. The PCR positivity rate in the Centre Region was 5.5% in 2016. It has been shown that appropriate interventions could reduce the risk of mother to child transmission of HIV from 20-45% to less than 5%. To attain this level of reduction, appropriate interventions among which the PCR test on all exposed infants should be done between 6- 8 weeks. The Cameroon operational plan (2018-2022) for the elimination of mother to child transmission has as objective to attain a less than 2% and less than 5% of PCR positivity rate at 8 weeks and 24 months respectively. To contribute in the attainment of this national objective, Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Board (CBCBH) developed the strategy of Cohort Monitoring for close follow up of the HIV infected

mothers and their HIV exposed infants (HEI). This study presents the results of the pilot phase of the implementation of the PMTCT Cohort Monitoring strategy in the Centre Region of Cameroon.

### METHODOLOGY

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study in 29 high volume health facilities in the Centre Region. All HIV exposed infants (HEI) seen in labor and delivery and in post-natal care services were systematically enrolled in the infant cohort monitoring register. Each enrolled infant was assigned to their birth cohort and a specific cohort monitor followed the said cohort to ensure that the infant underwent all the prescribed EID tests and the outcome test at 18 months. This study focuses on data collected from October 2017 to June 2019 cohorts.

### RESULTS

1,913 children were enrolled in 19 infant cohorts constituted during the study period. Among those children, 1,830 (95.7%) received ARV prophylaxis within 72 hours of birth and 1,425 (74.5%) received Cotrimoxazole between 6 weeks and 8 weeks

of age. Of the enrolled infants, 1,698 (88.8%) had their first PCR (PCR1) sample collected by eight weeks. 1,639 (96.5%) result were returned and documented in the facility among which 29 (1.8%) were positive. Twenty-three (79.3%) of the positive infants were initiated on ARV among which 22 (95.7%) were initiated within one week. Also, of the 139 (7.3%) who had their first PCR sample collected after eight weeks of age, all results were returned with two positives (1.4%) and both infants were initiated on ART within one week. The rest of the 76 (4.0%) infants enrolled exited their cohorts before their first PCR.

### CONCLUSION

PMTCT Cohort Monitoring gives the opportunity for a close follow up of HIV exposed infants leading to early detection of infected infants and their immediate enrolment on ART. PMTCT CM should be scaled up to all PMTCT health facility in view of attaining the aforementioned national objective of PMTCT.

**Keywords: HIV, PMTCT, Cohort Monitoring, HEI, EID**



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# Sexual Reproductive health in Cameroon 155 Deaths Recorded in the South West Region in 2023

According to Reanne Nkwate, Reproductive Health Focal Point at the South-West Delegation for Public Health, figures for the 1st half of 2023 showed that 155 women died in the region while giving birth.

International Human Rights Organizations are advocating for a minimum emergency relief package for girls and women in humanitarian crisis zones of Cameroon.

## Ingrid Kengne

The statistics on infant mortality are just as worrying. It speaks of early neonatal mortality due to the birth of more and more premature babies. These unchecked deaths are increasing for several reasons. The lack of health personnel and the closure of several hospitals in the region. This is a consequence of the socio-political crisis that has been raging there for close to 8 years now.

"Under normal circumstances, the South-West region does not have enough midwives. With the crisis, the need for sexual and reproductive health care has increased. Some tortured and maltreated midwives and health workers have asked to be transferred. Several health centers have also closed. The few midwives available are doing their best to provide the services they can. Sometimes, they are unable to go to health establishments, especially when there are restrictions on movement," laments Reanne Nkwate.

The South-West is not the only region of the country suffering from a lack of healthcare services. Cameroon has been experiencing three crises in recent years. The security crisis in the Far North and the socio-political crisis in the North-West and South-West regions. Not to mention the influx of refugees, which undermines the resilience of host populations. This situation is not without impact on health care provision. Specifically the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls. According to Noemi

Dalmonte, deputy representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Cameroon, 60% of maternal deaths and 45% of neonatal deaths are caused by humanitarian crises worldwide.

In Cameroon, an estimated 4.7 million people are in humanitarian need. The country's 2024 humanitarian action plan shows that 1.8 million people need emergency assistance to access health services. In particular, prenatal consultation, childbirth, family planning, treatment of sexual violence and many others.

This comes at a time when over 210 health facilities have been destroyed or abandoned, according to latest figures from OCHA. This is due to attacks or natural disasters in these regions. As a result, the services offered by medical personnel are being cut back; the supply of essential equipment, inputs and care is limited.

"The result is a substantial increase in cases of home birth, with a high risk of maternal and neonatal mortality. Difficult access to services increases unmet need for family planning. Exposing women and girls to the risks of unwanted, unintended or early pregnancies. Similarly, the risk of sexual violence increases for women/girls, who are the prime targets of violence in conflict situations." Unfpa

According to the United Nations Population Fund (Unfpa), current planning does not allow for proper monitoring, both in the health sector as a whole and in the achievement of reproductive health targets. For example, out of 43.6% of health funding mobilized last year, no data dedicated to reproductive health is available.



Nurse taking care of a new baby

## “Carrefour Caca” Nightmare for Inhabitants of Yaoundé VI subdivision

At *carrefour Caca*, excrements mixed with water flow onto the road, leaving an unbearable, disgusting odor. Some fifteen septic tanks connected to nearby houses of the neighborhoods of *Biyem-Assi*, *Accacias*, *Jouvence*, all in the Yaoundé VI subdivision, have been built in the middle of the main road. Despite their proximity to administrative buildings and even a market, they are not maintained, hence causing a nuisance and putting the health of population at risk.

## Ingrid Kengne

For more than two decades now, inhabitants of these areas have been regularly wading through the neighborhood's wastewater. These

People complain, but nobody does anything about it. Neither the mayor's office of the Yaoundé VI subdivision, nor the urban community, seems to care about the situation that has given this neighborhood its unglamorous name: "Carrefour caca."

"We are tired of complaining. It's really disgusting. The people living around here are not financially fit to do anything about it. Besides, the septic tanks are in the middle of a public road, making it difficult to do anything about it," explained an inhabitant of this neighborhood.

She went further to say that inhabitants of this neighborhood concerned no longer complain because they do not think it will make any difference. They are also afraid of reprisals from the state and administrative authorities. With only a few months to go before the 2025 presidential elections, this is not the best advertisement for the powers that be, she noted.

Most of these residents say they cannot move because of the hard economy. "When you find a place to live, you hang

on to it, because landlords can demand up to ten months' rent from new tenants. Residents are condemned to live permanently in foul odors. They try to protect themselves by keeping doors and windows closed, but of course that doesn't stop the smell," Mr. Nana lamented.

All around, business men and women go about their daily activities, ignoring the unpleasant smell that they have become so used to it. Further down, these waters flow peacefully past a number of food joints, before emptying into the river which car washers fetch for their work. The situation has not helped matters for these poor traders who toil very hard to make ends meet. "You can perceive not just the terrible odors, but the environment is very nasty too. This has sent many customers away, making me to return home most of the days with much left over food, irrespective of the fact that I cook very little," lamented a food vendor in this area.

"I am not satisfied with the environment in which I am working, but what do I do? I gain my daily bread by washing cars here. Knowing fully well that the water I used day in day out is contaminated by the contents of these septic tanks I make sure I sanitize my hands always," a car washer explained.

Other businesses around this area are



Carrefour caca

clothes boutiques, tailoring workshops, provision stores, spare parts shops and others.

The consequences of the overflowing septic tanks extend to road users. "I honestly dislike when I board a taxi and it takes that direction. Every time I pass there, I feel very uncomfortable because it smells bad. One can even vomit. You always see the excrements coming out of the ground flowing on the road," a taxi user lamented.

Hepatitis A, E. coli, salmonellosis, gastroenteritis, giardiasis, typhoid fever, campylobacteriosis, cryptosporidiosis, leptospirosis and kin infection are common diseases inhabitants of these areas are exposed to, according to health experts.

In addition to the excrement spilling onto the pavement, the roads in *Biyem-Assi* are severely damaged.



## Resurgence of COVID-19 worldwide

# Cameroon prepares response measures

**The Minister of Public Health, Dr. Manaouda Malachie, has reminded health workers of the importance of systematically testing people with flu-like or respiratory symptoms.**

It has also recommended screening suspected cases of Covid-19 in health facilities and stepping up border testing. These measures are designed to protect everyone's health.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a major health crisis caused by an emerging infectious disease that appeared in mainland China at the end of 2019, coronavirus 2019, whose pathogen is SARS-CoV-2. The virus is the cause of a pandemic declared by the World Health Organisation on 11 March 2020. In recent days, reports have emerged of a resurgence of COVID-19 in certain African and European countries. In order to avoid recontamination of Cameroonians, the Minister of Public Health, Dr. Manaouda Malachie, has reassured public opinion about the epidemiological situation in Cameroon, at the end of the meeting of the Strategic Council for the Management of Public Health Emergencies which he chaired on 28 June 2024 in his office, concerning the situation of the resurgence of COVID-19 in the world.

In fact, having examined all the results of the testing organised both at our entry points and in our health facilities throughout the country, no positive case of COVID-19 has been screened by the screening system put in place. In accordance with the protocol and in accordance with the precautionary principle required by the International Health Regulations, it once again invites healthcare workers, for their own protection, to :

Systematically test anyone arriving at a health facility who presents with influenza-like illness, respiratory distress or any suspicion of respiratory infection; systematically screen suspected cases of Covid-19 in the emergency, consultation and hospitalisation departments of all our public and private health facilities; to the teams at the Border Health Posts, the Minister prescribes the reinforcement of systematic testing of suspected cases and the voluntary screening of travelers on landing in Cameroon, who are strongly advised to go through the thermal cameras if they have been predisposed to do so.

Finally, he called on the public to remain calm and not to give in to the misinformation appearing on social media, as the situation remains under control. Dr Malachie Manaouda has also warned certain health professionals who, according to certain reports, are trying to exploit Covid-19 for commercial ends, to the detriment of the population, that he will spare no effort to punish any deviation.

The Minister pointed out that the health system currently in place is robust and well-oiled to ensure optimal management of any possible resurgence of cases of COVID-19. Finally, the Minister of Public Health, pointing out that



Dr. Manaouda Malachie

the toll-free number 1510 is open for any further information, is counting on the civic-mindedness of all citizens and firmly insists that there is no need to worry about the current situation. The COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon officially begins on 6 March 2020. As of 14 January 2024, the death toll stood at 1,974.

Charone DONGMO (journalism student on internship)

## Nursing profession

# Soigner La Vie association demands for an improvement

**This was the theme of a round table organised by the Association Soigner La Vie (Caring for Life Association) on 15 June 2024.**

### Arnauld DJIATSA

In every healthcare system in the world, the nurse is clearly the hub and the essential link in the process of deploying the manoeuvre. The Soigner La Vie Association is doing all it can to raise nurses' awareness of their noble mission by gradually building a quality identity for nurses around the thinkers.

The round table organised on 15 June by the Soigner La Vie Association recognised the importance of the debate on the enhancement of the nursing profession, and offered the more than 12 participants an appropriate platform for a discussion on this theme from the point of view of those who subscribe to the logic of nursing thought. The desire of the thinkers around this round table to build an ethics and deontology around this profession shows the great topicality of this question, which was also apparent during the discussions at this second round table on 15 June 2024. The general impression among round table participants was that positions of responsibility are clearly occupied exclusively by certain professions (doctors) at central, intermediate and peripheral level. From this point of view, Cameroon's health policies contribute to the

handicap suffered by its health system.

An observation of the context in which the nursing profession is practiced in Cameroon reveals latent inadequacies in the identity of nurses. These irregularities were not conducive to the emergence of thought in the nursing discipline. Nurses have been made vulnerable by the socio-professional and societal situation in Cameroon. This vulnerability has earned them the label of "drug thieves". Indeed, since the advent of nursing in Cameroon, the strategic summit does not seem to have gone beyond the point of representing the nursing professional as a substitute for the medical function. The interdisciplinary collaboration that nurses and midwives should be developing with other health professionals (doctors, for example) to deliver better responses to health needs is generally vertical. However, more consideration for nursing resources would be a guarantee for improving the quality of care, humanising care and identifying skills, which would be a positive consequence for self-determination and commitment to act in accordance with the ethics essential to quality of service.

Many of the participants in this round table are convinced that the dream of nurses asserting their independence will



Soigner La Vie association

not come true unless nurses themselves are called into question. While it is true that the State has liberalised the training on offer, it has to be said that some of the products that sometimes come out of reference schools are not very effective in the field.

The aim is therefore to propose ways of

rethinking the promotion and enhancement of the nursing profession in Cameroon, based on the following themes: the evolution of the nursing profession, the design of strategies to enhance the value of this profession and the construction of a strong identity for nurses.

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Recruitment at MINSANTE

# Mismatch between supply and demand

The Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms is seeking to recruit 80 qualified health workers nationwide, that is 50 general practitioners, 10 senior nurses in the first grade of the civil service category, 10 specialist nurses/State Qualified Nurses (SDNs), and finally 10 senior nurses in the second grade of the civil service category B.

At least 2,000 doctors have graduated since 2020. Only 50 general practitioners were recruited by the State in 2023. Despite the whining of the President of the Cameroon National Medical Association, Dr Rodolphe Fonkoua, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is seeking to recruit 80 qualified health workers nationwide, i.e. 50 general practitioners, 10 senior nurses in the 1st grade of the civil service category, 10 specialist nurses/State Qualified Nurses (SDNs), and finally 10 senior nurses in the second grade of category B of the civil service. It's shameful that we have reached this point. These 30 nurses, out of the 30,000 or so trained to date, would not even meet the needs of a district hospital. In the meantime, obtaining authorisation to work as a private practitioner in the healthcare sector has become a real obstacle course, where everything is skillfully done to prevent success. What does the system really want? Richard Tchabda, general supervisor at Yaoundé Central Hospital, is indignant. According to the online news site Cameroon info, 400 doctors have been recruited out of 700 who have completed their training in Cameroon, but most of them prefer to go into exile. This year too, there has been no change in the number of job offers. Also Training courses in the field of health are not rare in the country, yet despite the numerous applications, few doctors manage to get recruited. "To continue to train unemployed people, to prevent them from exploring other opportunities outside Cameroon? It's no wonder, then, that we're seeing more and more health centres and clandestine treatment centres spring up, even in markets. After that, we'll pretend not to understand why initiatives to stop phenomena such as the illegal sale of



Medical graduates demanding for employment

medicines and many other crises undermining our health system from top to bottom have failed," adds Richard Tchabda. In the absence of integration into the civil service, the majority of doctors who have just completed their training prefer to go abroad to work in better professional conditions where they will be better paid. Apart from that, the proportion of doctors who still refrain from going abroad prefer to practise in popular towns such as Yaoundé or Douala, where job opportunities are

more likely to be available than in towns in the north and south. Also, the uneven distribution of these health workers across Cameroon's 10 regions still leaves some areas under-medicated.

**Charone DONGMO (Journalism student on internship)**

Bad breath

# The unpleasant smell

Bad breath is caused by bacteria in the oral cavity or a dirty stomach.

Hum, what a smell! These are the thoughts of some Cameroonians when faced with a person with bad breath. "It's true that some customers have bad breath. When they arrive, I move away just a little or I look the other way because I can't tell them. Out of 10 customers, I can even have 4 with bad breath", confides Natacha, manager of a children's shopping centre. Like her, many people suffer from bad breath on a daily basis and throughout the day. Bad breath is a tricky subject to talk about, but some resign themselves to doing so for fear of offending people's sensibilities: "I only put up with it because the customer is king. So, even if that's how I put up with it, if you tell them, they'll get angry", rants shopkeeper Moustapha.

Halitosis, commonly known as bad breath, is an unpleasant smell that comes from the mouth. It's a recurring problem among the general population these days. Adults, young people, teenagers, men and women - everyone is affected. Generally speaking, odours occur when people have eaten foods such as garlic, onions, cabbage, etc., or when they smoke. However, people who have not consumed these foods and psychoactive substances also suffer. So what are the causes of this odour?

It should be noted that there are several types of bad breath: "morning bad breath, and bad breath that you have throughout the

day despite having brushed your teeth in the morning", explains Charles TSIMI, a doctor. Morning breath is "physiological, normal and common to everyone in the morning. Bad breath is caused by bacteria in the oral cavity; bad breath that occurs despite brushing can be due to a dental infection, a rotting tooth or a dirty stomach", explains the doctor. So, when



it comes to bad breath, oral hygiene and the foods you eat are the main causes. If you have dental problems or cavities, the food will stay there and develop. And if brushing is not good and there is tartar, this creates halitosis. To avoid halitosis or bad breath, it's advisable to brush your teeth after every meal, and to consult a dentist if you have dental problems. We recommend eating plants such as spinach,

which is rich in chlorophyll. Mint and thyme mouthwash can mask bad breath. A little tip: to find out if you have bad breath, simply lick the inside of your wrist with the middle of your tongue, leave to dry and smell your wrist.

**Audray NDENGUE (journalism student on internship)**

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## District hospitals in Cameroon

# Urgent need to improve technical facilities

Poor technical facilities, insufficient staff and dilapidated infrastructure are seriously hampering the quality of care in Cameroon's district hospitals. This situation, which has persisted for many years, compromises access to quality healthcare for a large part of the population, particularly in rural areas.

Désiré Effala

**D**istrict hospitals are an essential link in Cameroon's healthcare system, providing primary healthcare to a large proportion of the population. District hospitals are spread throughout the country, particularly in rural areas, where they are often the only health facility accessible to the local population.

Despite their crucial role, Cameroon's district hospitals face a number of challenges, including inadequate technical facilities. This situation has a considerable impact on the quality of care provided to patients, and hinders access to adequate health services for a large proportion of the population.

A lack of equipment that compromises the quality of care

The lack of adequate medical equipment in district hospitals is a recurring problem. The existing equipment is often dilapidated, or even out of use, and does not allow patients to be

treated properly. This is particularly worrying in emergency departments, where speed and efficiency of care are paramount.

In addition, the lack of technical facilities limits the possibility of carrying out certain medical examinations and procedures, forcing patients to be referred to regional or central hospitals, which are often far away and expensive.

A negative impact on people's health  
The lack of equipment in district hospitals has a direct negative impact on people's health. Patients cannot receive the appropriate care they need, which can worsen their state of health and lead to complications and even death. What's more, the inadequacy of technical facilities is contributing to the overcrowding of referral hospitals, which already have to cope with a large influx of patients.

A call for urgent action  
Improving the technical facilities of district hospitals is an absolute priority for Cameroon's healthcare system. It is essential to provide these health facilities with the medical equipment they need to ensure high-quality patient care.

The Cameroon government needs to mobilise the necessary resources to finance the pur-



chase of new equipment and the maintenance of existing equipment. It is also important to put in place effective management and maintenance mechanisms to guarantee the sustainability of the investments made.

In addition, medical and paramedical staff

need more training in the use of medical equipment. Improving the technical facilities of district hospitals is a crucial investment in the health of the people of Cameroon. This will ensure access to quality healthcare for all, particularly in rural areas.

## Interview

# "We believe that with investors we will be able to meet these challenges".

Dr Marie Laure Noubeg, Radiologist



**Dr Marie Laure Noubeg, Chief Radiologist at the Fondation Médicale André Fouda can you tell us about your medical imaging department and how long it has existed in your hospital?**

First of all, the Fondation Médicale André Fouda has existed since the 1960s, first under the name of the Fouda clinic, then the André Fouda polyclinic. We started out with imaging in the form of standard X-rays with manual development, then automatic development, then ultrasound and there was a time when there was no imaging at the Foundation. We actually started in 2011 and it's only since 2023 that we've brought in digital DR radiography with Tele-radiology software, as well as Doppler ultrasound, which we've been doing since the 2010s. We plan to develop this activity with mammography and dental panoramic imaging. With teleradiology,

we can also interpret scans and NRIs from other facilities.

**What equipment do you currently have?**

We now have a Doppler ultrasound machine and a lung room for digitised X-rays, which we use to take chest X-rays and mainly bone X-rays.

**What is digital radiology all about?**

We used to have what were known as analogue X-rays, which came in 2D formats. At the moment, digital radiology allows us to transmit images, and above all we have very high definition images that can be analysed in detail on high definition screens. The main focus is on definition, which is very good, and the ability to carry out teleradiology.

**How many patients do you receive here and what is the reception like?**

We currently receive an average of 07 to 10 x-ray patients a day and almost the

same number of ultrasound patients. There are times when we also import scanner images and interpret some 05 to 07 per day. As far as reception is concerned, as you know, in a private facility we take a very close look at this aspect. We've gone to great lengths to ensure that we always offer a very friendly welcome. The secretaries and receptionists are fairly well trained. When patients arrive, they are generally more stressed by their pathologies and often want to be seen as quickly as possible. We make every effort to ensure that they are taken care of as quickly as possible, with the utmost kindness and friendliness. And we also make a point of ensuring that our staff make the best possible diagnosis.

**What are your difficulties and what are you lacking?**

We're just starting out. We have a basic technical platform for a facility like ours, including ultrasound and X-rays. At the moment, we'd like to extend our activities to other imaging modalities, in particular dental panoramic imaging, mammography, CT scans and MRI. That's quite a big investment. Another difficulty is finding staff with whom we can expand our activities to give this Foundation, which is one of the pioneers, the technical facilities it deserves. So we need financial investors, both here in Cameroon and in the Diaspora. We need medical and non-medical staff who are interested in ensuring that we have good technical facilities in our country. We believe that, with investors, we will be able to meet these challenges.

**Do you have a message for investors and potential partners?**

Yes, I would say to anyone who wants to invest in health to come to the Fondation Médicale André Fouda. We have a very friendly management team. So whether you're a person or a partner investing in health in the Diaspora, in Cameroon, or an economic investor, we have a structure that is welcoming and ready to collaborate to extend its technical platform to provide good health services to our populations in our geographical area.

**What are your prospects for the future?**

Our vision is to extend our medical imaging facilities to include mammography, dental panoramic imaging, MRI and CT scanners, as well as interventional radiology. We have the skilled personnel to do it. We need economic, health or even non-medical investors who are interested in the health sector to be able to give a good technical platform to a historic Foundation like ours so that we can better serve our populations.

**A word to the people who want to come to your Foundation**

I'd like to tell people who want to come here that the Fondation Médicale André Fouda is in the process of extending its technical facilities. It remains a very welcoming Foundation, ready to serve you.

**Anything else you'd like to say?**

As far as our medical imaging colleagues are concerned, we would like to work together to develop tele-radiology, interventional imaging, mammography, dental panoramic imaging, scanners and MRIs at the Fondation Médicale André Fouda.

Interview by Désiré Effala



Poitiers Polyclinic of Douala

# Therapist in patient care

*But what does a therapist have to do with modern medicine? This question was asked by a patient we accompanied to the Poitiers polyclinic for a stomach complaint. One of the doctors replied that he identifies people's needs and expectations.*

**Alphonse JENE**

In the explanations grid, then in the middle of a consultation, we saw him setting up appropriate individual or group therapies. And so he works with medical and social professionals on the various psychological aspects.

"The therapist that I am, through my wide-ranging therapy grid, I therefore contribute to the health of the body and mind around these practices in order to best encourage the patient in their care journey. This is already very simple. This is alternative and complementary medicine," explains Isaac Ervé Njoh, a clinical health practitioner in life therapy.

It all starts with consultations with doctors, who ask the therapist to intervene, which means that no stage in the treatment process is skipped. "We can come directly, depending on the case. But in the majority of cases, it's the specialists and health professionals who refer the various patients to me. Because when we talk about breathing, when we talk about respiratory frequency, it's not a machine that will give you this respiratory frequency, but it's the therapist that I am who normalises your respiratory frequency, who naturally normalises your heart rate, who normalises and aligns the body and the different energy centres that make up the human body", explains Mr Njoh.

In practice, this branch of medicine uses exclusively manual techniques supported by therapeutic exercises and lifestyle monitoring. To go into more detail, there are gentle physical activities to re-establish the body's proper alignment, blood circulation and all that follows, energies to tone the organism. There's also respiratory therapy, to nor-

malise heart rate and respiratory flow, while supplying the body with oxygen and restoring the balance between the organs. "When the blood is low in oxygen, it can produce so many diseases, including cancer. A lack of oxygen in the cells is a potential source of cancer," explains Isaac Ervé Njoh, researcher and martial arts master.

There are therapeutic massages. "It's a fusion of several massages, nine of which are derived from a typically ancestral medical approach. The aim is to maintain the body's capacities, as well as relieving pain," he explains.

And finally, there is deep relaxation, which helps to give us new energy (to face up to the many worries and constraints to which every human being is subject).

Those concerned...

These therapies are of interest to people suffering from mental misery, exhaustion, respiratory problems, sleep disorders, erectile dysfunction and even memory problems. It concerns the health of the spine, muscles and joints. In short, the human body as a whole. "It concerns the mind as much as it does the physical body", explains the practitioner, who goes on to explain: "In general, our health is conditioned by the energetic stability in the body. All this needs to be reinforced by correct breathing, a well-chosen diet, a scrupulously respected lifestyle, good quality sleep and activity adapted to the demands of each body. But this is far from always the case. Why is this so? Because the conditions of life, the rhythm imposed, the many worries and constraints to which every human being is subjected, are enough to lead to disturbances that generate illness. And so, through my broad range of therapies, I contribute to the health of the body and mind through these practices, in order to give the patient the best possible support in



their treatment", he explains. Here, consultations last between an hour and a half and two hours, just because we're exploring the body in both its physical and mental dimensions. We might as well say it: it's a fusion of all the specialities. Naturally, in Poitiers, the answer is repair. In other words, when physiotherapy is no longer an option, the patient must return to the the-

rapist to revitalise the organs. Finally, it should be noted that life therapies are a set of methods and actions aimed at alleviating physical and mental suffering and guiding people towards joy of living and happiness. To date, 20 patients have regained their health, including 10 cases of sleep and 10 cases of lack of mobility.



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## Private Hospitals

# Nearly 105 licences issued to vets

*50% of veterinary surgeons trained in Cameroon this year are unemployed, i.e. 25% are not involved in any activity related to the profession. This was a constant fact during the ordinary assembly of the National Order of Veterinary Surgeons of Cameroon on 28 June 2024 in Yaoundé.*

Having as goal the improvement of the veterinary conditions and the modernization of this sector, the case of the lack of employment is an important question for the council of the order, elected some twenty months ago, its missions on the administrative plan, the aforementioned council to carry out the inscription 121 veterinary doctors with the table of the order and to deliver nearly 105 authorizations in private clientele; it also modified certain articles such article 8 to modify in 16 and article 38 on the fees on the private clientele also carrying out other actions. The quantity aspect is not to be overlooked, as the veterinary field is facing a constant increase in the number of students graduating but finding themselves unemployed.

The Cameroonian veterinary association

is also encountering problems in terms of competition based on competitions and skills, following the introduction of the BTS (advanced vocational training certificate) and training for livestock engineers, which is causing difficulties in the search for employment.

Nevertheless, the progress made on the financial front is to be congratulated, as it enabled the conference to be held at the hotel. The birth of numerous projects on breeding and the promotion of work, for example, which are in line with an improvement in the laws based on good confraternity, but also the notion of animal welfare through antimicrobial resistance is also important.

*Angélique EKAMAN (journalism student on internship)*



## Animal health

# Counterfeit veterinary medicines

*Often originating from Nigeria, Africa is experiencing a number of problems with the sale of counterfeit animal medicines.*

The shortage of animal medicines on the market and the lack of development of the veterinary sector in Cameroon are major problems resulting from the copying of medicines. Most of these modest farmers or individuals do not have enough money to treat and protect their animals, because for some veterinary centres, such as the one in Efoulan, the price depends on the quality: "Kela products cost around CFAF 35,000 and antibiotics start at CFAF 6,000", says Eric IKOUNGA, a veterinarian at the Efoulan Veterinary Agency. Breeders turn to these dubious medicines out of desperation, in order to keep everyone happy by offering extremely low prices on the market.

This is not without consequences, because the expense of these products creates "an impact of resistance in the animal's body and complicates its care", explains Eric IKOUNGA. "In my experience, the most counterfeited drug, or at least the active ingredient, is Ivermectin, which is an external antiparasitic for pigs and cattle, but not for dogs or cats, because the dosage is often fatal for dogs if it's a good drug," he adds. The diseases resulting from this fraudulent



use on animals are those of antimicrobial resistance, also caused by non-compliance with dosage. "Parvovirus in dogs, which is also on the increase as a result of climate change, is also one of the consequences, he points out,

To put a stop to this in Cameroon, "I advise my colleagues and customers to use the normal route, by using products from the Kela, provit or encre biophar-

macie laboratories, and always respect the dosage". The instructions must also be followed, as they contain the main active ingredients, the route of administration and the dosage according to the animal's weight.

*Angélique EKAMAN (journalism student on internship)*



Bad breath

# The green tea solution

**A study has revealed that the antioxidants in green tea help to combat several causes of bad breath, with polyphenols in particular reducing sulphur compounds and oral bacteria that contribute to foul breath. Daily consumption of green tea can eradicate bad breath.**

Danielle NGO NGEN (Journalism student on internship)

**B**ad breath is a phenomenon that affects almost 1/4 of the population, which means that people with bad breath have to restrict their social interaction to avoid upsetting others. At the same time, the riches of Cameroonian soil provide solutions to this oral problem. When exhaling through the mouth and nose, an unpleasant odour is released, known as bad breath. Bad breath or halitosis occurs when the air exhaled through the mouth and nose has an unpleasant odour, causing discomfort to others. But it can be temporary or more long-lasting when a health problem is the cause.

This phenomenon, which affects between ¼ and half the population, is in 85-90% of cases of oral origin. The mouth naturally contains bacteria that feed on

proteins from food, saliva and oral cells. 60% of the bacteria in the oral cavity are found on the surface of the tongue, in its folds called villi. The tongue is responsible for 41% of cases of oral bad breath.

It's always obvious when you have bad breath, and most of the time it's the reaction of those around you, especially if the problem persists. To find out, some people will have to lick the inside of their wrist with the back of their tongue, wait a few seconds for the saliva to dry and then, if the wrist has an unpleasant odour, their breath is not good. So, to remedy this problem, which often involves the reticence of those around us, there are quick and simple natural remedies to combat bad breath so that you can move around with complete ease.

Green tea is good for oral health for a number of reasons. A study has shown that the antioxidants in green tea help to combat several causes of bad breath, with polyphenols in particular redu-

cing the sulphur compounds and oral bacteria that contribute to foul breath. That's why drinking green tea every day is a great way to get rid of bad breath.

On the other hand, if you already notice bad breath in the morning, simply squeeze some lemon juice into a glass of water and drink it as soon as you wake up. If you're in the habit of eating out, always take a wedge of lemon with you to chew on, or put an orange in your bag or at the office for an emergency snack to combat bad breath. Vitamin C and increased saliva production, thanks to citrus fruits, will help improve breath immediately.

In addition, crunchy fruit and vegetables can help to produce saliva, which helps to eliminate the bacteria that cause unpleasant odours and prevent dry mouth. So biting into an apple can help clean your teeth and remove the food particles that can also be at the root of this oral indisposition. What's more, sometimes you get the urge to eat nutrients such as garlic or onions, which may



Green tea solution

be good for your health but bad for your breath. So to reduce the effect of these vegetables on your breath, basil can act as a mouth freshener. Like parsley and other herbs, basil contains polyphenols that break down the sulphur compounds that cause bad breath. To take advantage of

its deodorising properties, chew a basil leaf after eating a meal containing garlic or onion, then drink a large glass of water. Using these plants helps to maintain healthy oral hygiene and combat bad breath.

King of herbs

# A natural anti-poison

**A study has revealed that the antioxidants in green tea help to combat several causes of bad breath, with polyphenols in particular reducing sulphur compounds and oral bacteria that contribute to foul breath. Daily consumption of green tea can eradicate bad breath.**

Danielle NGO NGEN (Journalism student on internship)

Soft to the touch and highly fragrant, this gift from Africa is used in Cameroon and elsewhere to unblock fallopian tubes, relieve painful periods, eradicate bad breath and cleanse the body of poison. One of its interesting features is that it is highly repelled by herbivorous animals, making it the "king of herbs".

King of Herbs is an annual plant with an upright stem and soft, green leaves. It is very fragrant and its cyme often has flower heads with white flowers. What's more, one of its special features is that no herbivorous animal dares eat it, hence its nickname the king of herbs, because it is thought to have a natural power. This plant has been used for thousands of years in almost

every region of Africa. It is used to heal wounds, ease the pain of pregnant women, relieve rheumatism and fever, and combat bad energy.

It is an excellent natural anti-poison; in Cameroon, for example, it is known to be used to combat poison by simply picking the young leaves, preferably in the evening at sunset, washing them well and eating them raw. The same treatment can also be used for stomach problems.

What's more, the king of herbs unblocks the fallopian tubes, so women with blocked tubes and problems conceiving use it to relieve themselves. In this case, all you have to do is consume it dried and powdered in the form of an herbal tea. It is also used to relieve painful menstruation and worms in women. It is also an excellent antibiotic, as women use it to clean their private parts.



However, this plant also combats bad breath and is used to relieve athlete's foot by regularly rub-

bing the leaves on the affected areas. In some regions, the Herbal King is used to attract good

vibrations, chase away negative energies and protect against financial loss.



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## Plastic pollution

# 78% of water tested contains microplastics

According to Dr Gilbert Kuepouo, coordinator of the Centre for Research and Education for Development (CREPD), a 2018 study found that 3,377 chemicals are potentially linked to plastic pollution and 906 are associated with packaging plastics, of which 148 have been identified as more dangerous.

**Elvis Serge NSAA**

The bottle intended for children contains the most microparticles per litre. This information was released to the press during a conference organised by CREPD on 28 June 2024 in Yaoundé, under the theme: "A better understanding of the problem of plastic pollution to act intelligently in informing and raising awareness: the role of the media".

The aim of the event is to inform, raise awareness, involve and engage the media in the fight against plastic pollution in Cameroon and the various international initiatives to tackle it. CREPD is working for a toxic-free future for all. We eat plastic, we breathe plastic. Plastic particles have even been detected in placentas. On average, we ingest the equivalent of 5 grams of plastic a week, the size of a credit card. In 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) acknowledged the widespread presence of microplastics in river, sea, tap and bottled water, but said it was unable to reach a decision on the health risks due to a lack of studies. On 5 June 2023, World Environment Day took the form of a call to combat plastic pollution. A few days earlier, on 28 June 2024 in Yaoundé, Dr Gilbert Kuepouo, coordinator of the Centre de recherche et d'éducation pour le développement (CREPD), organised a press conference on the theme: "Better understanding the problem of plastic pollution to act intelligently in informing and raising awareness: the role of the media". The aim of the event is to inform, raise awareness, involve and engage the media in the fight against plastic pollution in Cameroon and the various international initiatives to tackle it. CREPD is working for a toxic-free future for all.

CREPD's mission is to bridge the gap between science and action for sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. "Bisphenol A, a chemical found in some plastics, can disrupt the hormonal system and increase the risk of cancer, diabetes and obesity," explains Dr Ebaya. According to Dr Gilbert Kuepouo, a 2018 study found that 3,377 chemicals are potentially linked and 906 are associated with packaging plastics, of which 148 have

been identified as more dangerous. Plastic waste management practices contaminate the food chain. There is also contamination of the food chain through poor plastic waste management practices. New research has shown that there is dioxin in free-range chicken eggs.

For example, 1 egg exceeds the EU exceeded EU daily safety limit for chlorinated dioxins by 220 times. One source of human ingestion of microplastics is water from plastic bottles. In March 2018, the publication of a study by the State University of New York caused a stir. It revealed that 93% of the water tested contained microplastics, with an average of 10.4 microparticles per litre, on average twice as many as in tap water. According to the information website <https://partage.agirpourenvironnement.org/s/rapport-Nous-buvons-du-plastique>, 78% of water tested contains microplastics. The number of obnoxious microparticles is highly variable, ranging from 1 to 121 microparticles per litre for 33cl Vittel kids. Children's bottles contain the most microparticles per litre. The main plastics found were polypropylene (PP), polyethylene (PE) and polyethylene terephthalate (PET), suggesting contamination via the cap and bottle. Polyethylene is more opaque and rigid than PET. More resistant, it can contain chemicals. It is used to make plastic bags, milk bottles, cleaning and personal care product bottles, sports and medical equipment, as well as rubbish bins and pipes.

According to the coordinator of the Centre de recherche et d'éducation pour le développement (CREPD), plastic pollution has visible aspects through the physical presence of plastic in the environment and invisible aspects through the chemicals contained in plastics. Invisible (chemical) pollution is an aspect that is still largely unknown to decision-makers, the media and the public, despite its negative impact on human health. In fact, a 2018 study found around 148 dangerous chemicals used in the manufacture of plastic to give it certain physical characteristics (flexibility, transparency, flame resistance, colour, etc.). Worse still, these chemicals easily migrate from the plastic into the food and drink they are used to package or contain, exposing consumers during the use phase. Children who play with plastic toys are exposed to these chemicals. Once



The Centre for Research and Education for Development (CREPD)

plastics have become waste, they continue to release the chemicals in them into the environment, into landfill sites or during open burning. Studies show that these chemicals are associated with infertility, cancer and other chronic diseases that are on the rise in modern society. In addition to its impact on the environment, pollution caused by waste also leads to serious health and safety problems. Accumulated waste can become a breeding ground for bacteria and various parasites, increasing the risk of spreading disease.

The Basel Convention is the most comprehensive global agreement for the management of hazardous and other wastes. In May 2019, the Basel Convention adopted two amendments that clarify the scope of the Basel Convention as it relates to plastic waste. UNEA decision 5/14 5.2 "Putting an end to plastic pollution...". The European Commission has also called for the start of negotiations on a legally binding international treaty on plastics. Although the Basel Convention requires Parties to comply

with the new amendments relating to plastic waste, it also allows them to take more ambitious measures to protect human health and the environment. Countries therefore have a golden opportunity to take a holistic approach and tackle plastics at source, not only by banning or regulating the trade in waste, but also by adopting measures further upstream (production phase) that regulate the production and use of plastics, in order to foster a local circular economy that is non-toxic, climate-friendly and safe.

CREPD oversees the work of some 40 NGOs in French-speaking Africa that are members of the IPEN network on the sound management of chemicals and waste, and is a member of the Basel Convention's Plastic Waste Partnership (PWP), accredited to the work of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. Partner of MINEPDED (Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development).

## Collecting plastic bottles

# The painful conversion of Christophe NDENG

This unemployed civil engineering technician makes his living collecting plastic waste in Yaoundé.

**Danielle NGO NGEN (Journalism student on internship)**

Early in the morning, Papa Christophe NDENG puts on his combat gear to go about his business. His main activity is collecting plastic bottles from the markets and rubbish bins littering the streets of Yaoundé. He chooses the smaller bottles that he sells. It was the vagaries of life that led him to take up this activity. "If people helped each other, the world wouldn't be as bad as it is today," he says. In the dustbin, we collect bottles, we reclassify, people still use them because not everyone can go to the factory to buy them. Otherwise, I'm a civil engineering technician. I also do it to distract myself because I have nothing to do. "I'd say that people forced me into this: I have to do this to survive while waiting for the people who exterminated my children to be arrested", he

explains.

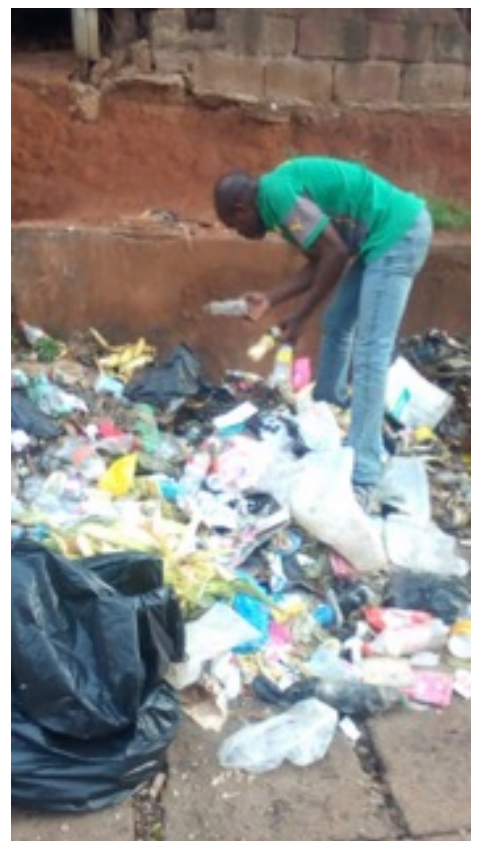
In spite of himself, he rubs shoulders with these insalubrious places in search of plastic bottles. Christophe is also helping to protect nature. "Society is chain after chain, without stopping. We also clean up the atmosphere and remove waste from the ground, otherwise in fifty years' time there will be no life left. The earth is suffering, people are suffering, and animals are suffering from these plastics. So we need to clean up, we need to remove, and we need to do it urgently. The report from pollution to solution published by the United Nations Environment Programme shows that plastic pollution leaking into aquatic ecosystems has increased sharply in recent years and is expected to more than double by 2030, with disastrous consequences for human health, the global economy, biodiversity and the climate.

The report points out that plastic accounts for 85% of marine litter and

warns that by 2040, the volumes of plastic pollution flowing into marine areas will have almost tripled, adding 23 to 37 metric tonnes of plastic waste to the ocean per year, the site says. In Cameroon, the environment is also threatened by plastic pollution, with 78% of water tested containing microplastics, according to a recent report by the Centre for Research and Education for Development (CREPD).

Many Cameroonians, like Papa Christophe, carry out this activity at great risk to their lives. Because they are exposed to a number of diseases. Well-informed, they take precautions such as disinfecting their bodies after collection, taking certain natural products to stifle inhaled odours, and many others, as Papa Christophe pointed out to us.

What's more, buyers of these plastic bottles collected in unsanitary areas say they apply hygiene rules before use.



Christophe NDENG picking plastics



# Sport for the disabled

Team sports such as handball, football and basketball are often practiced by disabled people, especially those with paralysis who use crutches or wheelchairs. Serge Abama is a reference

Danielle NGO NGEN (Journalism student on internship)

Generally speaking, the term disability is defined as the inability of a person to live and act in their environment due to physical, mental or sensory impairments. Most of the time, this results in difficulties in movement, expression or understanding for the person concerned. On the other hand, a person who gets around on crutches for a few weeks following an accident and encounters obstacles is the same person who is disabled without being handicapped. This distinction is important in determining which government programmes and measures they will be entitled to. Team sports such as handball, football and basketball are often played by disabled people. But mainly people with paralysis who use crutches or a wheelchair. Serge Abama is one of them. Affected by poliomyelitis, which paralysed him, and abandoned by his mother when he was very young, he grew up using crutches and now needs a tricycle to get around. Despite the difficulties he has faced in his family and in society, he has been able to overcome

them.

But Serge Abama is disappointed because he was unable to be part of the team that took part in a recent competition outside the country: "Given that everyone had to take care of their passports, I wasn't able to collect the money in time, despite the fact that I really wanted to be part of the team. I pray that at the next competition I'll be able to represent my country. I'm training and waiting for this opportunity". Para athletics is a sport derived from athletics. Brazilian athlete Clayton Hélio Da Costa is one of the oldest disabled athletes.

It was in 1946 at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in the UK that people with motor disabilities first organised wheelchair races. As is the case for everyone, physical activity helps people with disabilities to avoid developing illnesses associated with being too sedentary, as well as the social isolation that degrades their quality of life. In sport, social inclusion can mean, for everyone, the possibility of accessing and practising the physical and sporting activity of their choice, and taking it up at amateur or high level. Handisport quickly became a leisure activity and then a competitive one. In 1989, the International



Paralympic Committee brought together all the sports organisations for disabled athletes. Today, certain disabled sports such as wheelchair basketball can be played by able-bodied people.

## Physical Education

# One-third of adults worldwide at risk of disease from not doing enough physical activity

A new study has found that nearly one-third (31%) of adults worldwide did not meet the recommended levels of physical activity in 2022.

This puts them at greater risk of cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes, type 2 diabetes, dementia, and some cancers.

It also has a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing.

In addition, the study by the World Health Organization together with academic colleagues, found that levels of inactivity continue to rise.

The authors say the findings show a worrying trend of adults becoming less physically active, with this trend increasing by about 5 percentage points between 2010 and 2022.

If this continues, countries will not meet the global target to reduce physical inactivity by 15 per cent by 2030.

"We must renew our commitment to increasing levels of physical activity and prioritizing bold action, including strengthened policies and increased funding, to reverse this worrying trend," says WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. People are least active in the eastern Mediterranean region and South-East Asia, with levels of physical inactivity in these both regions at 40 per cent.

In contrast people are much more active in other regions, with levels of inactivity in the Western Pacific region (28%), European region (25%) and African region (16%).

Disparities also remain between gender and age,



Group of aged persons exercising

with women and people over 60 generally less physically active.

The WHO recommends that adults have 150 minutes of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity, or equivalent, per week.

On a positive note, almost half of the world's countries have made some improvements in reducing physical inactivity over the past decade.

And 22 countries may reach the global target of reducing inactivity by 15 per cent by 2030, if their efforts in reversing the trend continues at the same pace.

The WHO is calling on countries to strengthen policy implementation to promote and enable physical activity through grassroots and community sport and active recreation and transport (walking, cycling and use of public transport), among other measures.



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## Africa

# New study suggests climate change could mean declining malaria risk

A new study led by the British University of Leeds predict that the hot and dry conditions brought about by climate change will lead to an overall decrease in areas suitable for malaria transmission from 2025 onwards.



**T**he research entitled "Future malaria environmental suitability in Africa is sensitive to hydrology" was published in May, 2021 in the journal Science. This would come at a cost of reduced water availability and a greater risk of another significant disease, dengue, Simon Gosling warned. The Professor of Climate

Risks & Environmental Modelling is a co-author the study and helped to coordinate the water modelling experiments used in the research. Previous Africa-wide assessments "tended to solely represent surface water using precipitation". Authors of the new study éweighted ensemble of global hydrological and climate models to estimate present and future

areas of hydroclimatic suitability for malaria transmission.é The researchers hope that further advances in their modelling will allow for even finer details of waterbody dynamics which could help to inform national malaria control strategies. Malaria deaths peaked at 608,000 in 2022, according to the World Health Organization. That year, Africa registered 95%

of deaths globally.

The malaria parasite mostly spreads to people via infected mosquitoes.

In recent years, extreme rainfall and floods in some African countries have contributed to stagnant waters that become breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

In 2023, the WHO's World Malaria Report included a chapter on

the link between malaria and climate change for the first time, highlighting its significance as a potential risk multiplier.

When a small number of cases of locally transmitted malaria were found in the United States last year, it was a reminder that climate change is reviving or migrating the threat of some diseases.

## Nigeria Battles Cholera Outbreak, Sets Up Emergency Measures

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) has activated a national cholera emergency centre after the outbreak of the disease in the country.

**A**s of June 24, there have been 1,528 suspected cholera cases and 53 deaths across 31 states and 107 local government areas, with a case fatality rate of 3.5% since the beginning of the year. Dr Jide Idris, the Director-General of NCDC, has expressed fear that the situation might be compounded as the rainy season intensifies.

The government has called on all Nigerians to be more vigilant, adopt good sanitation and hygiene practices at home and in their workplace, and take preventive measures to combat the spread of cholera. The Ministry of Environment also advised Nigerians to avoid locally made drinks such as kunu, zobo, and fura to prevent cholera.

